1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-8 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

"The openings in the wall there," she explained, when we asked her about the two squares cut into the wall behind the altar, "are for all things that fly. In this place they must come and go as they like. Bats come here, and insects of all kinds, and when they want to go back to the bush, they must be able to go as they like. That is the wish of the gods. So they told us long ago."

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We were led from house to house. The gods had spoken. We were friends, and as friends who came not to harm, we were given the hospitality of friendship. There were other shrines, but we did not have to ask about them. They were pointed out to us with the other sights of the village.

The closed low hut near the Apuku shrine we had entered was to the river god Toné. It was a very small enclosure, and before it was a plant which covered the low entrance. It belonged, we were told, to an albino woman who was possessed by Toné. But she was not in the village now. Farther down the path was a larger house, another shrine. This had a piece of iron over the door and, when we asked about it, the girls who were following us ran, and the men merely said that it was the place of the Kromanti obia and passed on.

As we continued on our way, each woman was anxious not to have us slight the house her man had built her or fail to admire the carvings that were inserted into the weave of the palm walls. The huts were swept clean—the cleanliness of the entire village was even more striking than that of others we had visited—and but for a few stools, which were brought out for the strangers while they spoke with the old people who lived in the quarter, they were entirely bare. In every house, however, there was sure to be a shelf, large or small, or several shelves, on which stood prized food trays with carvings which covered both inner and outer surfaces. Combs and food stirrers were taken down and shown us, and the calabash dishes made by the women